

Prisoners Plea:

HUMBLY OFFERED IN A REMONSTRANCE,

With a Petition Annexed, To the
Commons of England in Parlia-
ment Assembled;

By *GEORGE WITHER*;

Falsely charged to have composed a Libel
against the said Commons, and there-
fore now Prisoner in Newgate.

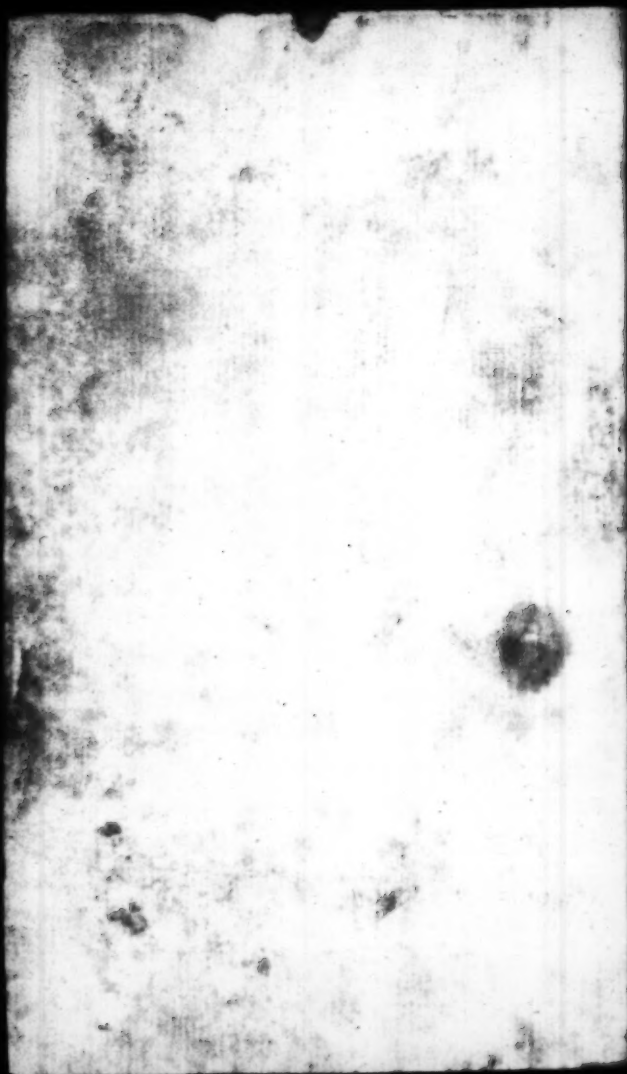
It containeth also, many Interjections not to
be excus'd; As also a Colateral Corollary, of pub-
lick Government; and in particular touching

THE BLOOD-SHED,

Whereinto God is now making Inquisition.

2 Cor. 12. 9, 10. * *My strength is made perfect in
weakness; for when I am weak, I am strong. There-
fore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in
necessities, in Persecutions, and in distresses for the
sake of Christ, and a good Conscience.*

LONDON, Printed in the Year, 1661.



A Coppy of the Letter to the *Speaker* of
the House of Commons, wherewith the
following Remonstrance was sent to the
said Commons.

SIR,

I Was committed to Newgate, as a Ly-
beller against the House of Commons;
Therefore, to Vindicate my self from that
Aspersiō, and to intimate some other things
pertinent to their Consideration, I humbly desire,
you, to present thereto, the Remonstrance and
Petition herewith sent; which I neither hope
nor desire should be totally read in the House to
the interruption of Publick Affairs, but per-
used rather, by the Members thereof at their
best leasure. I ought not to have been longer
here detained, by the Warrant for my Com-
mitment hither, then untill your next meet-
ing after the Date thereof, but should have
been transferred into the Custody of your Ser-
geant at Arms, who it seems is not willing to be
troubled with me: And, indeed I cannot blame
him, in regard I am so poor, that I am likely
to be a burthen unto him without profit, as I
may be perhaps, henceforth to him also, who is
now my Jaylor. I was once your Clyent, and
you my Patron; but, you are now engaged to
speak rather against me, then for me: yet, you
may

may be Persecutions; which is much better
then a false Friend: and will think peradven-
ture, when you have perused my Remonstrance,
that I am fitter for an Hospital, then for a Pri-
son. I hear many say, you can speak well; And
I shall say so to, if you can find in your heart,
a Motive, to speak a good word for me in sea-
son; and it may perchance do you some honour;
for, Age, Poverty and decay of health have
rendred me an object of Compassion, being at this
time so utterly spoiled of all (yea and of more
then all) that I am likely here to perish, unless
God (as he hath hitherto done) shall extraordi-
narily provide for me. If by reason of Pub-
lick Affairs, your House be not at leasure to
take me into consideration, it would be one Act
of Charity, to commit me to the custody of some
Person (such a thing having been heretofore
done) who is able to lodge and feed me at his own
charge. If my parol might be taken for my appea-
rance when it should be required, I would in-
violably keep my word; but, indeed I know not
where you will certainly find me when I shall
be deliuered from hence; for, so God help me, as
I yet know not where I may then rest my head,
within Walls and under a Roof, unless it be in a
Church-porch, or some such place. Do, as God
shall incline your heart; for, this is really the
present Condition of,

Sir, your Friend and servant,
Geo. Wither.

The Prisoners

PLEA FOR HIS VINDICATION:

Humbly offered,

To the Honourable *Commons* of *England* in
Parliament Assembled, in a *Remonstrance*,
with a *Petition* annexed; by *George Witber*,
Prisoner in *Newgate*, under pretence of
Lybelling against the said *Commons*.

Proverbs 18. 13.

*He that judgeth a matter before he hears it, it is
shame and folly unto him.*

HONOURABLE,

THough I am numbred among Male-
factors, and some think me (as *Ahab* did
Elias) to be one of those who troubles
Israel; I have honestly endeavoured to
serve God and my Country, even in those actings,
which are supposed *Criminal*; and perhaps may
have

have, yet, something to do, wherein I may be further serviceable in my *Generation*. Therefore, feeling my health impaired by being above six Months without hearing, shut up in a close Prison, deprived of those conveniencies and necessities which my Age and condition require; I think it my duty whilst I have some strength left, to use the best means I can, to preserve my *Life* for his sake who gave it (though I have little cause to value the same for its own sake) being confident whatever hardship shall attend it, that he will permit no more to be imposed on me, then he shall render conduceable to his Honour, and make me able to bear. Our late Epidemical distempers, have reduced me from a considerable Estate, to be much less worth then nothing, and if those blusterings had hitherto continued which ruffled about me, before, and when those *Papers* were seized, for which I am confined; doubtless, the *Floods* had ere this time overflowed my soul, or the stream ran so strong against me, that it had been impossible, I should have landed a *Remonstrance* within your threshold, with hope of acceptance; and what may be now done I am uncertain; nevertheless, you being again assembled, whom I am supposed to have scandalized, (and long time elapsed without Prosecution, since the limit of my confinement hither by Warrant) I conceive your displeasure (if you be displeased with me) to be so moderate, that I am emboldened to offer my self to your remembrance, and to make my defence by this *Addresse*; whereto, if you please to vouchsafe Audience, a few minutes with patience, it may peradventure, save you the
expence

(9)
expende of many dayes hereafter, with some of
ther advantages to boot; and though the length
of it threatens tediousness, it may prove as well
worth your hearing as most Causes, ten times
longer in pleading, when *Friends* are made, and
great *Lawyers* Feed. I shall be hopeful also that
this will come the more seasonably to move your
compassion, because it comes so soon after your
late *Commemoration* of the greatest favour vouch-
safed by God to the *Humane Nature*; and in re-
gard the deliverance of an *Innocent* out of Prison,
may be as allowable at a *Christian Feastival*, as
Liberty was to a *Murderer* at the *Jewish Pass-*
over.

I am, and have alwayes been (however misre-
presented) so true a lover of the *Publick Peace*,
that I was never designedly active in pulling
down, or setting up any *Supream Power*, or de-
lighted in defaming those who are in *Authority*;
nor purposely false to any, though I have been
accidentally disserviceable to some (when the ap-
pearances of *Supremacy* were shared among them
who were a medly of *true Friends*, and *Traytors*
to *God, King and People*; and when many of the late
Dissenting Parties were in Profession and Action so
fallacious in their *words & deeds* to each other, and
to themselves; as also so repugnant, that few knew
in whom to confide; and when *wiser men than I*,
were guilty of many failings. For, knowing that
all *Power*, exists by Gods *Grace* or *Permission*, I
still submitted conscientiously to that which was
most visible in being, not questioning how it was
obtained, how justly or unjustly executed, or
whether it favoured or disfavoured me in my

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own Particulars ; but continued in *Active or Passive Obedience* thereto , whilst it could protect it self ; endeavouring such things onely , as according to my understanding , ought in my place to be done , and which might best conduce to preserve the *Government* , in Righteousness to Gods Glory and their welfare , for whose sakes *Powers* and *Governments* were first given and Ordained : for , (how mean soever their *Places* and *Faculties* are) all men are obliged to serve in their *Generations* , with such *Talents* as are bestowed upon them , though they shall be Malign'd and Persecuted for their labour. In prosecuting this duty (though performed with much negligence & vanity) God hath now preserved me about 50. years in being a *Remembrancer* to my self and others , of such things (after a *Poetical mode*) as I conceived pertinent to our *Publick* or *Private Welfares* : And *Poesie* (though brought into contempt , by being made a *Bawd* to Pride or Lust ; and for the most part rendred serviceable to the World , the Flesh and the Devil) was generally priviledged to dare any thing tending to depresse *Vice* and advance *Vertue* , by plain or Enigmatical Expressions , according to this Sentence. ——— *Poets* ,

Quid libet audendi semper fuit, esq; Potestas.

Which in effect may bear this *Paraphrase* .

Vice, to reprove in whom soere,

The Poets Priviledged were.

Yea ; *Divines* , *Poets* , and *Philosophers* , have been that great *Counsel Table* of the World , by whom *Pietie* , *Morality* , and the Priviledges of the *humane Nature* have been preserved from *Barbarisme*

business, in all Ages, though many of them, in the *Times*, and among the *Nations* with whom they lived, had not much respect, nor so much *Civil Authority* as a *Petty Constable*. I presumed on their *Privileges*, and in order to the discharging of my Duty, lately designed a *Poem*, called *Vox Fulgi*, personating (*more Poetico*) the *Counties, Cities and Burroughs* of this *Nation*, reprehensively expostulating a few particulars, relating to what was then rumored, touching the Deportment of some of their *Trustees*; And I was thereto moved by the many murmurings, secretly whispered, or openly divulged by *Common fame*, to the begetting or fomenting of dangerous *Animosities*, though perhaps false; and to the infringing of our *Common Peace*, if true; Those *Rumors* I endeavoured to expresse in such manner as they were spoken, and with such *Inferences* as were made upon them by others, or naturally resulted from them in my apprehension; that, having fixed and made visible by words, those *Notions* which fluttered to and fro within me, I might the better see what they amounted unto; and make use of them to such good purposes, as I found cause of. And, I confesse, I made those whom I personated acting a *Reprehensory* part, to speak as plainly, as boldly, and as Magisterially, as I thought it became them; because, *fearful reprovers make fearless offenders*. Therefore, I conceive that which I did, was neither a transgression against any *Positive Law*, intrenchment upon good manners, nor abuse of my *Christian or natural Freedom*.

Having almost finished what I intended, I thought fit to offer it to the consideration of o-

and though it cannot yet appeare, others may thereby suffer great detriment hereafter.

The last draught of the said *Poem*, having many *Alterations* and *Additions*, which made it differ from the former, I purposed to make both agree in expressing my whole mind, had it not been prevented by that seizure. I added likewise, a *Post-script* to the said *Epigram*; of about four or six lines (as I remember) whereby I signified to the said Earl, that forasmuch, as in confidence on his Nobleness, and Humanity, these *Papers* were to him privately communicated, I presumed and expected (however they were by him relished) that no use should be made of them to my disadvantage (or words to that effect) which evidently implies that I had no *Lybellous intention*. The said *Doctor* hath perhaps so much candor, that he will attest his seizure of the said *Epigram*, with the said Books, as also of his then taking special notice thereof; but if not, I can make forth what I affirm as well by a probable *Demonstration*, as by other *Testimony* if need be; though I was then in some things wanting to my self, by that sudden surprisal. For, I was so much distempered to see my honest intention, likely to be quite made void, by taking away every line of what I had composed, that I regarded not what might befall my *Person* thereby; and should not have been so calmed as I now am, and then was within a few Minutes; but that something assured my heart, the loss of those *Papers* in that manner, would produce more advantages both to me, and to what God hath determined, then if it had succeeded otherwise; and I have in part already so found it.

But

But for this *Survey* I owe nothing to the world;
For, notwithstanding my *caution* to avoid giv-
ing just cause of offence, the said *Poem* being quite
taken out of my hand, (so that I could not pro-
duce it for my Vindication) it hath been so mis-
represented by *Fragments*, to his Majesties Privy
Council (they not having leisure to peruse it all
in so ragged a hand as mine) that I was about six
Months past committed to this Prison, as a Ly-
beller against this House of *Commons*. Before
which *Commitment*, I heard a line or two, of the
said *Poem* repeated in that injurious manner, to
the *Attorney General* (who seemed to me so pru-
dent, not to regard the officiousness of the in-
former) as made me perceive what was intended.
For his objecting my words in that mode, without
the *qualifications* preceding, or subsequent, made
them appear like the Devils quoting of *holy Scrip-
ture*, or like his abusing the *Sacred Text*, who
saith, *curst is he who doth the work of the Lord*,
and leaves out this Principal word, *negligently*.
Thus do I seem to be dealt withall, contrary to
my apparent meaning; For, in the Title of that
Poem, called a *Lybel*, wherein the *Counties, Cities,*
and *Burroughs*, are personated, reprehending their
Providing Trustees onely, according to what
was commonly famed; there is a premised *Salvo*,
preserving the honour of the *Parliament*, and of
every faithful individual Member thereof, from
those *reproaches*, and the said *Salvo* was not there ver-
bally expresseed onely, but likewise really intend-
ed; and I effectually endeavoured throughout the
whole *Poem* to excuse them from what was mis-
transacted by *Surprise* or otherwise, as also by fo-

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reproving those that were faulty, that no man might be personally defamed though guilty; yea, so rather, that every individual offender privately applying those reproofs to himself, as he finds cause, might reform secretly what was amiss.

The *Parliament*, or this *House* cannot be Scandalized by discovering of meer casual failings in that manner, or of such contingences as were not in their Power to prevent: nor is any man justly to be blamed, for modestly taking notice of them, with an intention, to seek redress for what may mishappen thereby. If there be no such *Prevaricators* among you, as it was defamed, no man among you, is then reproved or concerned in that *Poem*. If there be such, they keeping there own Counsel, and reforming there manners, may be as free from Scandal as they were before that *Poem* was written, though it should be devulged; and I think it would add to your Honour, if published with your allowance; for the best way for men to prevent disparagement by *general reproofs*, is to take no notice that they more concern them, then every other man; and to approve of it as tending to the depressing of *Vice*, and the advance of *Virtue*.

*Scandals past by, are soon forgot,
And hid from them, who knew them not.*

They have exceeding crazie *Credits*, whose *Reputation* will be crackt with such touches; and I am rationally perswaded, that they who are prudent, and sober, will be ashamed to take offence at so innocent a *Prosopopeia*; seeing, though there may be folly in it, *wise men bear fools gladly,*
because

because they themselves are wise ; and none will be implacably displeased, but they whose imprudence will manifest, that their own *Consciences* do accuse them, for having been somewhat justly lyable to those *reproofs*.

If we may not in *genaral terms* reprehend indiscreet and vicious actings, in such a mode, and with such *Epithites* as to them belong, I may well affirm *Vices* are more priviledged then *Vertues*, and that *Morality* is in hazzard to be brought to utter contempt. If we may not without loss of *Liberty*, be permitted within our own *Private Closets*, to set in order our *fleeting thoughts*, occasioned by what we see and hear, and put them into *words*, that we may thereby the better consider what they amount unto, doubtless, we have little *Freedom* left us ; and I for my part (though I shall not whilst I live, desist from claiming the Priviledges due to the *humane nature*) will bear the infringing of them with patience, and rest contented with an *internal enlargement* ; yea, though I know it is as injurious to a free *English man*, to suffer uncondemned, as it was to *Paul* being a *free Roman* ; and I had rather be one of their number who suffer in that kind, then one of those, who lives in fear of their *words* and *thoughts*, who intend them all good, and no harm, in *Words*, *Deeds* or *Imagination*. It was reputed a dangerous time, and a Symptome of sad consequences, both by the *Jews* and *Romanes* (as their *Histories* testifie) when men were made Capital offenders for *words*. How sad then are those times likely to be, wherein *words well intended*, yea, tending to the *General Peace* and welfare (if rightly

rightly understood) shall be judged *Criminal* ? and, when some who misjudged them, do know in their own Consciencies, that they express nothing but what is true, and fit to be offered to consideration ? I know it to be a Priviledge claimed by this *House* to judge of the Crimes charged upon any *Member thereof* : If therefore, I had intended a *charge* in particular, against any one, or more of them, I would have brought it hither, though I have learned, by dear bought experience, what hazzard I might have run.

But, I having onely gathered together, what the *wind* had scattered, with a purpose rather to make a *Lenitive* then a *Corosive*, designed to present it to such hands, as I thought fittest to make application : For, perhaps (considering of what *Ingredients* it consists) if I should have presented it to your *Speaker*, or to any other of your *Members*, he or they, might as justly have been suspected my *confederate*, and an *accessary Lybeller*, as I now am to be a *Principal one*.

It may be objected against what I have raised from *Fame*, that she is a *Liar* ; I confess it true, as well in her *good* as *evil* reports ; and that in these times, *Fame* hath been very injurious both wayes : I am therefore so Jealous of all she *blabs*, especially of what concerns mens *Reputations*, that I give not credit to any rumor without well considering the *Circumstances* and *Relators*, before I receive it for truth (unless a fit of that *Levity* surprizes me, whereto most men are over prone.) And as I am wary how far to believe it, so likewise I am careful to make use of the *Truth*, *Falshood* or *Probability* thereof, so far forth as I can,

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both

both to prevent my doing that injury to another, which I would not another should do to me, and to render it as publickly advantageous also as I may without Scandal to *Individual Persons*. Therefore, though *Vox Populi*, is said to be *Vox Dei*, and *Common Fame* in some cases, reputed equivalent to a *Proof*, my *reprehensions* are always in *General Terms*, or at least of so large an extent, that *particular offenders*, are not thereby made discoverable; because, I have neither *warrant* or *purpose*, to bring men to publick *shame* or *personal punishment*; but to prevent it rather by giving *Delinquents* occasion so to take notice of their own *Prevarications* in private, that they may escape both *punishment* and *shame*. If this were not my *Principle*, I might have mentioned many things in particular, not meanly reprobable, as well *knowingly*, as by *Fame*, whereof even *Members of your House* are guilty; and which I might safely, and with a good Conscience, have charged upon them, if I had as *plain proofs* to evidence it to other men, as I have to ascertain it unto *my self*; And, to affirm this, is neither blameable in me, nor Scandal to this *House*: For, it is no dishonour to any *Society* to have it affirmed, that some of them are corrupt or faulty. The soundest Flock may have some rotten Sheep; There is no *natural body* without a blemish, nor any *Politick Body*, or *Civil Constitution* without defects. There was one *Traitor* among those 12. *Apostles* which were chosen by *Christ* himself; and if there be one faithful one among 12, of those *Prelates*, who in these later Ages, (as they are now *Elected*) do claim to be their *Successors*,
many

many good People are deceived. It were a Miracle if the People had not chosen some to sit here, who are not such as they ought to be. Though you have an *Eloquent Tongue*, an *undistempred Brain*, an *intelligible common Sense*, if you have therewith some Organs of the External Senses maimed, and other *members* defective, without your default (which is not impossible) how can you help it? or why should the *whole Body* be therefore blamed? I am not ignorant how tender I ought to be of your Honour; and to let you know, how far I am from being a *malitious prosecutor* of any mans Personal Crimes: One to me allied (who in that respect craved my advice and assistance) brought me a *Paper* containing the effect of *Articles*; by him intended to be exhibited against a *Member of this House*, with confidence and probabilities, of making unquestionable proof of the whole *Charge*; which comprehended such unmanly, unchristian, impudent, and Barbarous *misdemeanours* in words and deeds, that the Crimes being proved (as I think they might evidently have been) you could not have waved his *expulsion* with preservation of your Honour: yet for some good reasons, I made a stop of that intended *Prosecution*, and in hope to reclaim him, immediately declared the whole matter to an Honourable *Earl*, who to my knowledge had power over him, desiring his endeavour to reform him by his Authority and advice; for which *Civility* I had thanks returned, and heartily wish the *Gentleman* may be so truly reclaimed, that no further notice be taken of what is past, to his dishonour; For, by my wilful default no man shall

be Personally defamed, if reformation may be otherwise effected.

There is, without question, in some degree, a just occasion of every *Fame* wholly, or in part, whether good or evil, true or false; and a discreet taking notice thereof, might be a means of rectifying somewhat which is or may be misdono to private, or publick detriment; If there were such misallings as *Fame* reports, no great offence can be justly taken by the repetition thereof in my *Poem*: For, a verbal mention of *Pievarications*, whether in general or particular terms, is the least punishment due to *Transgressors*. If reproofs be misapplyed to them who are not faulty, or Scandalously to them that are guilty, the misapplier, not the *Writer* is the *Lybeller*. To prove that which is written to be a *Lybel*, all these following particulars must be concomitant: First, it must be written and devulged with a malicious intent, and the malice evidenced by some *Circumstances*. Secondly, it must be so published, that neither the *Authors name* is expressed, nor ought else, whereby it may be discovered if reputed Scandalous. Thirdly, it must either Scandalize the *Persons* by *Name*, or by such *marks*, as can make it applyable to no other man; or if it Scandalize *Societies*, it must Scandalize them wholly; for to say some of them, did such foolish or wicked actions, is no Scandal to them who never did them. I mention no offences, but such as are known to have been committed by some; for, to write against that whereof I knew not any one to have been guilty, were to teach men new *Sins* by naming them, which perhaps never came into their thoughts.

thoughts. There are few things misdone by any one, but such as many know others to have committed, and if they make a *Scandalous application*, be it at their own peril; for it concerns not me. To be debarr'd from a *general reproving* of such Enormities as are dayly found in *Persons* and *Societies*, would be a *paliating of Transgressors*, and an *infringment of the Priviledges due to Justice*, and the *Moral Vertues*; and therefore when all the *Circumstances* afore mentioned concur in a *reproof*, to denominate it a *Libel*, it must be intirely and openly produced also, to be judged of by those whom it may concern, and not by *fragments*: and then such onely are to pass *Judgement* thereupon, who are *Competent Judges* thereof, by being no *parties*; and who have taken every part of it into consideration: For, it is a *Privilege* due to God onely, who is *Justice it self*, to be judge in his *own Cause*; and is I think, a *Priviledge* Usurped by none else, except *Tyrants*, because I have observed, that, *Just Kings* and *lawful Judicatories*, presume to judge none in matters relating to themselves, but by *standing Laws*, justly constituted; and their *infringments*, by the *Common Law* of this *Nation*, ought to be evidenced to the *Consciences of twelve good and Lawful men*, as well as to the *Judges*, before the party accused is *Condemned to suffer*. In this *Mode*, if I shall be found an offender, I will patiently submit unto the *Verdict*, be it right or wrong; be sorry for my offence, if I have committed any; and make what other satisfaction I can, as I will also do, by whomsoever I shall be convicted of a *Crime*, though I intended none.

For,

For, having been many wayes a transgressor to Godward, I will not repine though he shall deliver me into the hands of *Men*, even of those men who having been forgiven many *Talents*, shall take me by the throat, and cast me into Prison, who trespassed against them to the value of a few pence onely.

Nevertheless, I think it will not misbecome me to say, that I have been somewhat over severely dealt withall, in being upon a slight view of my *imperfect Papers* unpublished, accused and committed, without hearing, to a destructive Imprisonment, for but mentioning the *Drunkenness*, *Debaucheries*, *Follies*, and other *Exorbitancies* of those, who have not been ashamed to act them, as well openly by day in the sight of the whole Country, as by night, to the occasioning of many disgraceful rumors, whereof I thought to have made some good use. And, but that I presumed on the candor of this *House*, and hoped that some *Novices* might have been improved for the better, since their *Election* by sitting *a while there*, as well as many have been heretofore made worse by sitting there *over long*, I had not brought this *Remonstrance* hither; but rather appealed to the *King* or *House of Lords*, as my proper Judges in this Cause, in regard none of them are *Parties*.

This *Nation* boasts of their great *Charter*, and of other petty ones: But, how enjoy we the *Priviledges* by them confirmed, when we are deprived of our *Liberties* unheard, upon misapprehensions, or the false accusation of beggarly and malicious informers, to the enriching of *Goalers* and *Messengers*, by impoverishing honest
and

and innocent men, as if Sheep and Lambs, were bred and kept for nothing else, but to be worried for *Dogs meat*? how can *humane Society* be preserved, or of what value are *Grants* of *Princes* for themselves, their Heirs and Successors confirmed by Solemn Ingagements, Oaths, Hands & Seals? and what trust is in them, if upon every slight *Jealousie* or *Suggestion*, they may be made void at the will and pleasure of those who are in *Power*, as often as they find the vacating of them will be their advantage? The *Priviledges* which God and *Nature* gave me, I will exercise as long, and as far forth as I can, without asking any mans leave, and suffer patiently when I cannot shun it, without making any account of that which hath no certainty therein: For, how can I believe that they who will hinder me from enjoying what is given by *Gods Charter*, will let me long possesse what I have by their *Grants*? When the World permits me to possesse *Liberty*, or any other natural benefit or *accommodations*, which are in her Power to give or take away, she permits it, but because, it is most for her present advantage, not out of love to *Justice*, or good will to me. And long experience hath taught me, that where *Power* is exercised without Law or Conscience, there fair *Promises* mingled with some *Acts of Grace*, are but baits to bring *Wild Fowls* to their *decays*; and *sleight performances* in hand, greatned by hopes raised from *Complemental favours*, and deeds confirmed with hand and Seal, are for the most part, but devices to keep *Tame Fowls* alwayes in readiness, as it were about the house, to supply such wants as may accedentially happen. It may be

be said of many now, as it was of *Severus*, of whom it is recorded, that he deceived every man who trusted him ; yet still found enough who were induced to trust him : so, most men in these dayes, though they have been often deceived, and profess they believe they shall still be deceived , by those in whom they seem to confide, do nevertheless act, as if they believed otherwise ; the manie reason whereof is , because, they cozen themselves : And whereas *Oppressions* proceeded heretofore from the *Pride, Avarice* and *Ambition* of *Princes*, now they proceed from the *Luxurie, Malice*, greediness, and baseness of the *People* turned *Courtiers* ; who under colour of a feigned Loyalty, rob *Kings* of their honour, with a shew of increasing their *Power* and *Wealth* ; of which they likewise cheat them, and by degrees corrupt their manners, and root out of them the *Royal Vertues* to which they were naturally inclined. By such *base* *Traitors*, if his *Majesties* constancy and clemency had not been impregnable, his last *Act of Grace* and *Indempnity*, had ere this time (if I am not deceived) been made void ; as his Engagements on the behalf of *Purchasers* have been, by a device, which picks our bones after our flesh is torn away, instead of what he graciously intended. Of this I am experimentally sensible ; for, I am not onely deprived of my whole *Purchases* with their improvements at my cost, without the allowance of one Foot of Land, or a peny in money ; But the *Prelate* who now possesseth it, his *Tenants, Officers*, or their *Agents*, making riotous and forcible entries into my possessions in a Barbarous manner, took my rents due to me, with

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with my Corn sown before he was Bishop there
yea that Corn that was housed also, a year before
his Admission; as if it had been purposely done
in contempt of the Kings Declaration and Engage-
ments to the contrary; who, by what is observed
in His Majesties struglings to moderate the vio-
lence of them who are inclined to Rigor (and by
what I have been informed of his generous re-
spect to the Preservation of His Royal word)
it seems to add much thereby to his Personal Ho-
nour; and evidences, that he hath more true
humanity, and Christian Clemency, then two thirds
of those, who have sought to honour and advan-
tage him by their severity; And if he endeavour
to strengthen those virtues by Gods assistance,
(who will never be wanting thereunto) until they
shall become habitual, they will cure all his In-
firmities, and cover all his sins, though they were
multitudes. I am as sensible as a man can be
of what I do suffer; I am as intelligible of what
I may yet suffer, and know as well as most men,
when any thing is illegally imposed on me: but
am so prepared for what may befall, that I
fear it not, nor will curiously bite the stones that
are flung at me, because I know the flingers; nor
will trouble my self to rate every Dog that barks
at me, nor complain frowardly of those that sets
them on; but, plead my innocency with a sober
boldness; declare truly my oppressions, and
sustain them patiently, in hope they will be shor-
ted, amended or ended: For, things grow ripe
as well in dark nights, as in clear dayes, though
few perceive it; and, that which men despise
proves other while, more pertinent to their wel-
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fare, then that which they best esteemed. *Adin* though, feared, hated and persecuted by *Abah*, and the rest of the *Princes of Israel*, told them that which was true, when all their *Court Prophets* prophesied Lyes; and he was more safe in Prison with bread and water of affliction, then they were by enjoying their Liberties, with plenty, and fortified with Armies to defend them from what he presaged: For, he is the *Protector* of all those, who stoutly and conscientiously discharge their duties; who, hath said by way of threatening, *Touch not mine Anointed ones, neither do harm to my Prophets.* Every true Christian is one of his *Prophets*, and in that sence I may say without Arrogance, I believe my self to be one, though I am often so called in derision; Or, I am in stead of one, at least, at this time to these *Nations*: and may say also, that I have been scurvily enough used, to be one of those to whom God vouchsafed an *Anointing with that Spirit* in a measure, somewhat more then ordinary: For, what may I expect to suffer when I shall be convicted of the Crime laid to my charge, who am uncondemned cast into this *disgraceful Jayle*, and left so neglected of the world, as if I were neither worthy to be acquitted or *Condemned*? Here, I consume the last of my dayes in a poor lodging, without servant or other attendant, during the long Winter nights, forced in my present sickness, to arise in cold and darkness, without convenient accommodation, nigh half an score times within a few hours, to disburthen Nature; I am put to more expence in one day, then all that amounts unto which I have in certain for subsistence

stance during my life; For my Friends being unwilling to hazard my health in a Lodging among common Prisoners, are compelled to pay weekly, as much for a poor *Chamber* (as would discharge a years rent for a *house with a good Farm* in the Country, yet cannot have it at that dear rate, unless they pay likewise weekly for one meal a day, besides extraordinary expences in other necessities, so much as provided me competent meat and drink five weeks, one week with another, before I came hither; which pittance did preserve me in good health without having any other addition, to the value of a penny; and I would to God there were not many at this time more oppressed then I am in this kind. That expence was defrayed, also by Charity, which made me then so frugall, lest there might be a failing thereof, as there hath been lately of what was formerly sent in hither: perhaps, by reason my offence being aggravated so much, that I being numbred and made a Companion of *Thieves* and *Murderers* without any difference, it hath rendered some of my Friends afraid to visit me; and for that, some other of them are so impoverished that they are disabled.

I would have added no more, but considering, with what *Malignancy* some giddy *Censurers* have objected against me, the harshest passages in my *Poem*, without their *Qualifications* as aforesaid, I cannot but be sensible of that influence it may have upon those hearers, who shall never see the said *Poem* in its proper dress, and perfected as I intended. I will therefore make bold to put your Honours in mind, that I shall conceive my self

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much

much injured, if any *Member of this House* shall in his Publick Capacity, pass a Vote against me concerning that Book which is supposed a *Lybel*, until he shall first peruse, or hear it wholly read; or, if he shall charge upon me as my *Ass*, either of those *imperfect draughts* thereof, which were seized in my Chamber, until I deliver it forth compleated according to my purpose; in regard, till then they are neither *mine*, nor ought so be reputed. I will once again also, put you in remembrance, that it is but the *Common Fame*, with some *Inferences* thereupon, which I would have expressed; and which therefore, if offensive, ought to be charged upon the *People*, not upon me, who did but *Escho* to what they spake. This being considered, and that I onely wrote in Private to a good end, what I had heard and partly knew (yea, and what some of you likewise and many Thousands know to be true) I cannot justly be termed a *Lybeller*, or that *Poem* a *Lybel*. Though he who seized my *Papers* (and is or was, as I am informed the Master *Newes Carpenter*, that chips out unto us the *Weekly Intelligences*) hath already deemed me (as I hear also) to the Gallows, and intends to endeavour what he can to prefer me thither, by publishing my late *Poem* in *fragments*, with his *Animadversions* thereupon; I shall have no cause to be displeased thereat, if I may have Liberty to answer him in Publick, and be allowed also a true Copy of the said *Poem*.

Habitual viciousness, hath so corrupted most men, and made them so slavish that they dare not speak of, or to, their own *Idolized Creatures*, but with *Epethites* and *Attributes* due to their Creator;

Creator; or with some abusive application of the
holy Text; nor hear things express'd as they truly
 are, or called by their proper names: and that
 makes my *Poem* so distastful to some Readers.
 This slavishness hath also partly occasioned, and
 justifies those whom you call *Quakers* (who do it
 by a Spiritual impulse, and not out of a carnal
 affectation to singularity) to neglect and condemn
 the Complements, Language, Dialect and man-
 ners of these times. Some of my *Predantical*
Censures without your doors (who know not what
 free Language is allowable to the *Muses* in repre-
 hending *Vice*) being more offended with *honest*
words and wholesome *Truths*, though soberly (if
 plainly and boldly) spoken, then with *wicked*
deeds; seem to think it little less than *Blasphemy*,
 to affirm, their are or may be *Fools*, *imprudent*, *rash*,
inconsiderate, or *debauched Persons* admitted into the
House of Commons; Nevertheless, you may per-
 ceive by what I have already expressed, that I
 know it to be possible, and why should I not be-
 lieve it so to be? when, was it otherwise? what
wise men among you have not so found it to their
 vexation and trouble? or how, could you be a
 true *Representative* of the *People*, if there were
 not such among you? considering, what for the
 most part, they are, how factious, how froward,
 how malicious, and how troublesome they have
 often been to themselves, and to your sober pro-
 ceedings? when I find *Daves* and *Doves* together
 in one *Dove-house*, flying dayly in and out toge-
 ther, I may possibly forbear to speak of it; but,
 if my Life should lie upon it, I cannot chuse but
 think and believe the *Daves* are *Daves*, who-
 ever

ever layes to the contrary, when they are such in *Shape, Colour, Feathers, Voice, and Action*; nor do I think the *Pigeons* are not true *Pigeons*, because their are *Doves* among them: I have been so used to a true *Pace*, that I cannot easily tread a shuffling *Amble*, or fall into a false *Gallop*. But, I will harp no more on this string, for it is harsh in mine own ears (God save them) and you are wise enough to apprehend what is considerable without more words. *Fools* are afraid of their own shadowes, and had rather be flattered into destruction by false representations, then to be delivered by plain dealing. *Truth* will nevertheless prevail at last in despite of *impostures*, and falsehood; God, hath sent his *Harbengers*, and will come ere long to put an end to the *Delusions* and *Confusions* which our incredulity, prophane-ness and Apostacies have occasioned to abound; yea, even that great *Mystery of Iniquity*, which begins to sprout afresh, and which hath lately appeared in many *Shapes*, ripens every day so fast, that it will shortly be rotten; and I believe (as old as I am) I should live to see the fall of it, if I might survive but till the Age whereto some in this *Generation* have attained: Gods will be done, for though I die before that time, I shall stand up in my *Lot*, to behold the effects of it. *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.*

I have now done with what I primarily intended by this *Remonstrance*, purposing at first to conclude with *Petitioning* somewhat for my self, relating to my present outward Condition; But, as my case, and the times are, I neither know what will be most advantageous, nor what is likely to be

be granted: for considering how I stand misre-
presented, many will be ready to speak against
me, and not one plead for me, except those
whom God shall extraordinarily incline there-
unto; and what respect they shall vouchsafe, lies
yet hidden between God and them. I think I
may truly profess, that I desire neither *Prospe-
rity*, nor *Adversity*, no not the best things abso-
lutely, at this present, as relating meerly to my
self; for as bad as it seems to fare with me, I
dare not ask for any thing absolutely, but what I
am warranted absolutely to pray for; because I
know not what God hath preordained as best for
me, and most tending to his Glory; and lest I
may Petition my self out of the *Frying Pan* into
the *Fire*:

Incidet in Scillam, qui vult vitare Charibdim.

Charibdis when I shun

I am on Scilla run.

That, which threatens the worst things, may
produce the best; that, which promisseth what
seems most desirable, may be most harmful; and,
assuredly it will so prove, if I should absolutely
desire it, especially, in these times of *Probation*,
wherein all *Persons* and *things*, are coming to the
Test. I am for my sins justly deprived of my
whole Estate, and well nigh of all outward com-
forts and conveniences (except such as God sends
in upon a new score) yet perhaps, I am not de-
prived of them for my *sins only*, but partly that
being thereby freed from those worldly intangle-
ments, which made me too regardful of my *Life*,
and *Personal Interests*, I might by the loss of them,
the

the more fearlessly discharge my duty to God and Men; as most commonly they do with more courage, who have but their *Lives* to lose; then when they have also great *livelihoods* to hazzard; and it may be, that they who rejoyce in their plentiful enjoyments of such things as I have lost, do possess them but to help ripen them into a *sinful insipitency*. It may be likewise, I having expressed such *Principles*, and *Resolutions* as the World thinks no man truly owns, it is necessary for the sake of many men, that I and some other should in this *Hypocritical* and *Apostatizing Generation* be proved by *Sufferings*, whether we are *true Professors* or *Impostors*; And if I shall be Ambitious of any honour in this World, it will be to be Honoured with such a *Probation*; all other *Temporary Honours* appearing to me in comparison thereof, less Honourable then that of the late *Prince Le Grange*; which is not altogether so empty a vanity as it is reputed by some sober men; because, possibly, that *Scène* of *Boy-games* (commonly called *Christmas Gambells*) was permitted (though not so intended by the *Actors*) to be a *sign* to this *Generation*, and to all who saw them, that the most substantial *Titular Honours*, *Glories* and *Pleasures*, of this World, will be very short, and when past away, leave them who affectionately embraced those *Clouds*, poorer and less honourable then they were before; if not more miserable. All Subcœlestial things are vanity, and I am so far from doating on *Temporary Honours*, that I should little value that precious *Jewell*, a *Good Name* among men, if it conduced not more to the Honour of God, and the

the Consolation and Edifying of others in *Vertue* and *Piety*, than to my Personal advantage; yea I had rather be a *George on Foot*, stiled simply *George Wither*, without any Attribute, having my share in the Honour of those, concerning whom it was said, *To you it is given to believe and suffer*; then to be a *George on horseback*, honoured among those *Grandeers*, usually Pictured riding as it were Tryumphantly on prancing Steeds, with *Guilt Trapsicks* in their hands, and the Title of *Excellency*, or such like written under them.

I have now little or no Portion in the World, but my *Life*, and if I should ask to be delivered out of this *Fayle*, my *Engagements* may bring me next day into another: For, I have no subsistence but their Charity, whose faces, or names for the most part, I know not; and should God cause them totally to withdraw it (which I am confident he will not, untill he provides for me another way) I shall soon be out of every mans Power: God hath been pleased here to prove me, as well by *Sickness*, as by *Poverty* and *Imprisonment*; in so much, that one Twelve-hours more of such Corporal tortures as I have sustained for some few dayes, would totally end all my sufferings; and I am perswaded God (whose mind I desire in all things to search out so far forth as lawfully I may) hath lately given that sharp touch in my *Flesh*, to make me consider how much more dreadful it would be to fall into his hands, then into the hands of Men, who cannot possibly inflict a greater Torment; and, that, if *bodily pains* may be so extream, how insufferable it would be if I should fall into the distempers of a *wounded* and
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despairing Conscience, by a wilful neglect of my Duty. But to prevent it, and furnish men with inducements to constancy in his service, he hath in that, as in all other straits, given me earnest both of his making issues out of all my *Tryals* and *Temptations*, and of preserving me safe and patient whilst they continue. When I had nor *Goods*, nor *Lands*, nor *House* left me wherein to rest my head, nor any certain place wherein my distressed *Relations* might have harbor; yea, when the addition of *Restraint* to *Poverty* in this disgraceful Prison, had made my *Children* an object of scorn and contempt; even then, Gods merciful Providence provided for them, to the wonderment and rejoicing of my Friends, by giving them in marriage, without *Portions*, to Persons of considerable Estates and good Reputation; and made it the more considerable, in regard they whose natural affections and moral Compassion, he inclined these unto, were never in their *Judgements*, or *Interests* united to that party with whom I was formerly engaged: But he who makes men of *one mind in a house*, hath made nevertheless such a loving and conscientious harmony, in their *manners* and *affections*, relating to a *Christian well-being*, that I hope it may be a sign of a more general composure of differences throughout the whole *Nation*; and I heartily pray it may be so; howsoever, by these and such *Pledges* and *Evidences* of Gods Love, my Faith in the mean time, may be preserved from failing, if I must pass through greater *Tryals*.

Those are possible enough to happen in divers respects; For, I hear that *Stigmatising*, and the
loss

loss of my *Ears* is the least I seem to deserve in the
 opinions of some; which though I repute it equal
 with the loss of my Life, I will neither make
 Petition nor Friends to avoid it, by any other
 means but this Apology; For, I deserve no such
 punishments by Law, and if I undergo them with-
 out desert, it hath been the Lot of better men,
 and Gods Will be done, who will enable me to
 bear what he permits to befall me. Some, own-
 ing worse Principles than I do, have suffered no
 less hardship with much courage: I have
 known a man in my time, to lose his *Ears*,
 to be *Stigmatized*, *Banished*, brought home
 again by Thousands as it were in Triumph;
 Chosen to be a Member of the *Highest Council*
 then being; and yet to have less honour in his
Exaltation, then he had in his *Sufferings*; *Sic*
transit gloria mundi: Thus the Honours, Disgraces,
 Bubbles, and Troubles of this Life, pass and re-
 pass into that which is contrary to themselves;
 and with me, all such things will so quickly come
 to an end, that I think them not worthy my care.
 It is possible, that I may shortly be cast into the
Dungeon, ten times worse accommodated then at
 present, There, I may be visited also with bodi-
 ly distempers, no less unsufferable then those I
 lately felt, and be left quite destitute of those
 supplies and means of easement, which were then
 vouchsafed; for there is already a failing
 of that *Contribution* which I formerly had, and
 it may be much less, in regard it came not
 (that I know of) from the hands or Charity of
 the Lord *Mayors*, *Sheriffes* or *Aldermen*, within
 whose Common Prison I am confined; nor from
 any

any Noble or very rich Persons ; But from them
only (or for the most part) whose Charity ex-
ceeded their Abilities, and from such (if I am
not mis-informed) whose certain livelihoods are
scarce sufficient to relieve their own wants and
their necessities, of whom they seem to be more
obliged to take care then of mine ; and as their
Number and Estates decrease by Death or Oppres-
sions ; so in probability must my relief diminish :
But it may partly be obstructed by a worse means,
in regard (if I am not much deceived) there be yet
some counterfeit Professors of Piety, who having
gained repute and profitable employments here-
tofore, by their formal complying with such as
are sincerely Religious, do for self ends private-
ly asperse and disparage their Brethren who are in
affliction, to the abating of that Charity, whereby
they were comforted : this way, I probably suspect
I may suffer by some, who insinuate that I have not
dealt so candidly as I ought to have done with
them ; whereas they abounding in their own
sence, have not only been unteasonable in their
demands and expectations, but palpably in-
jurious also unto me and mine : But my
Essential reputation depends on what is really in
my self, not on other mens Tongues ; and these
devourers of Widowes houses, under the colour
of long Prayers, have alwayes been as much my
Enemies and Traducers, as they who are openly
prophane ; of which two sorts there are so many
who make it their work to asperse me, upon the ac-
count of envy, malice, or self intrest, that I can-
not long escape their Evil Tongues ; and per-
haps I may now suffer in the opinion of this *House*,
by

by the misrepresentations of such Persons, as I have done heretofore.

But I being Experimentally acquainted with Gods dispensations as to *giving*, and *taking away*; do find their may be as just cause at this time, of *taking away* as of *giving* (least my corrupt Nature being prone enough thereto) I might more depend upon my own strength, or upon Gods gifts, or upon those by whom he send them, then upon him from whom they came. God *Almsufficient* by *adding* and *withdrawing*, keeps me both from *dispair*, and *presumption*. I find moreover, that not onely the seizure of my *Papers*, hath advanced my Primary intention, but that every hardship also which hath hapned thereupon to my Person, hath advantaged me; For, I who was heretofore served with nigh twenty servants in household at once, can now serve many *hard Masters*, and my self too, with more contentment then in those dayes. I have by *loosing*, gained somewhat toward my support; found somewhat which lay hid *within me*, to make a mends for what is defective *without me*, and can do many things for my self, which I never did heretofore; mend my Cloaths, make my Bed, my Sea-coal Fires, & sweep my Chamber, as well as any servant in the Jayle, and make the doing of these things a pleasing recreation. I may possibly be detained in Prison until I must lie in a lowlie Bed, or upon the bare ground, but whilst I am here I shall still have the *Walls* and *roofs* of a Prison to defend me from the cold Air; whereas, if I should Petition to be delivered hence, and obtain my request, without being some way provided for, I know

know not at this present any place wherein I can be certain to find so much shelter as I have here ; in regard, my son in whose Chamber at the *Temple* I had harbor, till I was from thence committed, was lately constrained to sell it to discharge a debt of mine, for which he stood ingaged; and this being considered with many other things considerable, I know not what to ask of you for my self. Excuse this *Verbosity*; For, old men (especially when oppressed) are full of words; Losers also (as our Proverb saith) may be allowed to speak; and though much of what I expresse may seem impertinent both to my Vindication, and to you, yet for many respects it will be pertinent to me, and to many more, when you have laid them aside (or shall neglect them) even to many of the Common People who are both your *Servants* and *Masters*. For, I have not scribbled all this, and enlarged it with many Collateral Expressions, so much to Vindicate my self, as in hope my Experiments in this suffering, may be of comfortable use now or hereafter, to some of those whom you represent. And, in truth, my Apologizing for my tediousness now I seriously heed it, is but a needless and impertinent mannerliness, according to the Common mode; for, it cannot be justly expected, that to the interrupting of *Publick affairs*, a discourse of this length should be read in your *House*; nor had I any such hope, though I directed it to the whole *House*, to intrest every individual Member thereof in my *Cause*; when his will and leasure shall there-to incline him; well knowing, that were it *longer*, or *shorter*, it will be totally perused by some of you, out of a Conscientious regard of my
suffer-

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sufferings; by some others, out of curiosity; by others, for their information touching those matters which may be thereby discovered relating to themselves, or the *Publick*; and, perhaps, by more then a few with a desire to find out somewhat therein, which may give them occasion to add to my affliction.

But, I may trespass against your patience more through my *tediousness*, in somewhat that I have yet to say, by occasion of that *Publick Humiliation* which is enjoined by his Majesties *Proclamation*; the sincere Solemnization whereof, will be another incitement to *Justice* and *Mercy*, in regard that which is most *Essential* to such Duties, is *Relieving the Oppressed*, the *Widow*, the *Fatherless*, and letting the *Prisoners* go free, next unto those *Offices* which are to be performed immediately to God. It hath suddenly Surprized me, and though it seem not to belong to my matter in hand, it will be of such concernment, that I cannot forbear in this place to insert it; knowing, it pertinent to this *Generation*, and my *work* therein; which being almost at an end, I will upon the said occasion, leave with you who are the *Representative* of this *Nation*, some *hints* and *Cautions*, fit to be taken into consideration by you and them, at this time, in respect of that said *Publick Humiliation*; Therefore that my words may appear to be worthy of so much regard, at least, as those which were spoken to *Balaam* by his beast, I pray be pleased, though I seem a *Phannatick*, to take notice that above a hundred of my *Presages* and *Preconjectures* heretofore published, & tending to the *Common welfare* (during the several changes
of

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of *Governours* and *Governments*, since I came to
years of discretion) have been evidently verified;
and some in particulars touching the prophanati-
on and abuse of *Publick Humiliations* and *Thanksgivings*;
and for which Impieties, and Hypocrisie,
those *Plagues* were increased, from which we de-
sired to be delivered, or other *Judgements* brought
upon us. It was too evident that for the most part,
there was more *Policy* then *Piety*, in the Cele-
bration of *Publick Fasts* and *Thanksgivings* here-
tofore; the first, being perhaps to delude People
by a shew of *Holiness*, to make them the more
willing to contribute supplies and assistance to
their *Designs*; and the latter to incourage their
Friends, dishearten their *Enemies*, or to Magni-
fie their own *Victories* and *Prevailings*, rather then
to glorifie God; And the *lean Calves* of their
Lips, which they then offered, were far inferiour
to the *Hecatombs* and magnificent Sacrifices of
the *Gentiles* in preceding Ages. Oliver Cromwell,
about, or little before the beginning of his last
year, commanded a day of *Humiliation* to be So-
lemnized, with a pretence to seek God for the re-
moval of a great *Mortality* then raging, as he pre-
tended; within a Month after that, he enjoyned a
Publick Thanksgiving, with a pretence to glori-
fie God for his two most *Signal Victories*; at which
times, I prepared and made bold to present to his
own hands, *Hints*, to remember him of such *Cau-
tions* and *Duties* as I feared he might neglect,
peradventure not without cause; For, no effects
followed answerable to those *Pious pretendings*;
and on the very day Twelve Month next follow-
ing his day of *Humiliation* to take away *Sickness*;
the

he himself sickned to death; and within a few weeks after that, even upon the same day Twelve Moneth also, which he set a part for a *Publick Thanksgiving*, he died of the aforesaid *Sickness*; which I take the more notice of, because, I find at the conclusion of the last *Adresse*, which I prepared for the said two *Solemn dayes*, these few lines;

*Sir, I have now perform'd my true endeavour,
If, nothing it prevails; Farewell for ever:
For, you, or I, or both, shall be ere long,
Where, you can do no right, nor I take wrong.*

God give a better success to our *Devotions*, then in dayes past; but I do yet see very small appearances thereof, for, the best *Sign* at present that God will at last deliver us from the *Judgement* now lying upon us, and avert those which we fear, is this; that *he removes them not before we truly repent*: I hear we have the same *Animosities*, and the same *Avengeful spirits* amongst us: I hear, the cries of the Widow, Fatherless and oppressed, are as loud and lamentable as ever; That *Prisons* are still as full, not onely of miserable decayed Debtors, but, also crammed up as it were, to the destruction of many mens lives, or healths; with Persons who suffer meerly upon the groundless Jealousies, and pretended Suspitions of malicious informers; and few take their Oppressions and starving condition into consideration. *Poverty* by *Oppressions*, and new *Oppressions* by *Poverty*, are become so *Epidemical* and *Universal*, that no History can shew us that there ever were in the *same Land* (where no *War* did then rage) so many

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thousands of the same Nation, made beggarly
and miserable by each other; even by their ac-
quaintance, their former Familiars, their Neigh-
bours, Brethren and Kinsmen; or, where there was
at so necessitous a time, so much *Luxury, Pride* and
excessive bravery in apparel. And the confede-
rates of the *man of Sin*, do so endeavour also to
root out their opposers, by whom the *Peace of God*
should be preserved among us; and have so in-
creased *Prophaneſs, Impiety, and Superſtition*,
that, though many now think this Nation in a hap-
py Estate, and near to a *Glorious Eſtabliſhment* in
their Mode; the World ſeems unto me, rather
nigh to ſuch a *Judgement* as *Noahs Flood*; or, theſe
Nations, by their paralleling them in their ſins, not
to be far from ſomewhat reſembling that which
befell to *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, unleſs God ſhall
prevent it, for the ſake of his *Elect*.

Give me leave therefore (who ſhall probably
never hereafter be troubleſome again in this kind)
to declare freely and fully what I believe God
declares unto my heart, by bringing an *Exemplary*
Judgement of his to my remembrance, recorded
in the 21. Chapter of the ſecond Book of *Samuel*,
which I am hopeful may operate ſomewhat, be-
ing well conſidered, toward the aſſwaging of that
blood-thirſtineſs, and toward purging away that
blood-guiltineſs, which lies yet upon us; For, not-
withſtanding the *blood* already ſhed, I do perceive
that not onely many men, who are no wayes in
their particular Perſons or Intreſt, dammified by
thoſe who are queſtioned for ſhedding blood, have
an unquenchable thirſt after more blood; but,
that Women alſo, who are naturally tender hear-
ted,

ted, are so inflamed with that thirst (if we may know their distempers by their words) as if the *Death* of others were half the *Life* of their Souls; and as if they had never heard, who hath given it forth to be the *Mark* of *Whorish Women*, to hunt after the precious lives of men. I heard since this Text came into my thought, that you had a Sermon Preached before you, upon the same parcel of *Scripture*, on the late day of *Humiliation*; but I have not yet seen it, nor heard what Application or Use he hath made thereof; when you have heard me, try the Spirits by which we are guided; for, I will declare my self impartially without respect of Persons, according to that *Light* within me, which becometh from the *Light Eternal*.

In the dayes of *David*, there was a *Famine* three years throughout the Land; whereupon, he enquiring of God the cause of that *Plague*, received answer, that it was for *Saul* and his bloody house, who had slain the *Gibeonites*, a remnant of the *Amorites*, unto whom the Children of *Israel* had sworn yet, (as it is added in the Text) *Saul* thought to slay them, out of a Zeal to the children of *Israel* and *Judah*. From this Record, and the Circumstances, I do undoubtedly collect, that *Famine* is a *Judgement*, proper to the avenging of unlawful Bloodshed; and in reason it so appears to be; For as Blood is the Life of men, so the Fruits of the Earth are the Life and preservation of humane Blood; and therefore justly taken away from those, who are guilty of that Sin. A *Famine* is now begun among us, likely to increase and continue, unless we make our Attonement and Peace

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with God; which the *King* taking into consideration, according to the Duty of his Place, strictly commanded all his People to seek unto Almighty God for pardon of our sins, by a General and unfeigned *Humiliation*; wherein he *Christianly* Professed, that *he* and his whole *Family* should so joyn, that we might altogether as one man humble our selves in his presence, in hope our *Devotions* might be accepted; and, I shall be glad if it hath been so performed, lest else, it so provoke God, that instead of removing and preventing a destructive *Dearth*, it bring upon us, all his three great *Plagues* at once, doubled; even *Wars*, *Pestilence*, and *Famines*, both Spiritual and Temporal. Let us take heed of it; And since *Bloodshed* is the principal crime, for which the *Judgement* already begun is feared will increase, and for the expiation whereof some satisfaction must be made, to witness the truth of our *Repentance*, (though it be not in our Power to make satisfaction for the least Transgression) let us all be so cautious to search into *the whole matter*, and to find out every Circumstance of our *Duties*; that we add not *Sin* to *Sin*, *Blood* to *Blood*, and suppose we do well, when we have done more wickedly, by an hypocritical misapplication, or an ignorant search. Or, least in place of true Christian *Oblations*, we offer up the abominations of the *Heathen*, who sacrificed the *Innocent* Children of their *Enemies*, to appease the Ghosts of their slaughtered *Princes*; or, do like them, who offered the Fruits of their *Body* to *Molech*, for the sins of their *Souls*; Or, lest we think, as many have done, we do God or our *Country* good service, when we
have

have oppressed, or slain, or banished, those who worship him not as we do ; even those, for whose sakes we are hitherto preserved, by him, in whose sight the Blood of the *meanest of his Saints*, is more precious then the Blood of the *greatest King*, who hath not aswell a *Saintship* as *Kingship*.

For the Expiation therefore of our *Blood-guiltiness*, so far forth as it will be requirable to testify the sincerity of our *Contrition* and *Repentance*, (plenary satisfaction as I said before, not being in our Power) we must effectually and speedily prosecute the *means*, which are but two in chief. The one is, the washing away of wilful *Bloodshed*, with the blood of *malicious Murderers*, by Executing *Justice*. The other is by *Mercy*, in pardoning those who have shed Blood *casually*, *ignorantly*, and without any apparant *malice* ; And, this *Justice* and *Mercy* must be dispensed without partiality, rashness, malice, or by-respect to our *selves*, or to any other. That, we be not deceived in the *Persons* who are to be the Objects of this *Justice* and *Mercy*, we must be very wary lest we incur the curse pronounced against them, who *Justifie the wicked and condemn the Innocent* ; so, instead of being rendred acceptable, become abominable unto the Lord ; For, the *World* is so full of deceitful *Juglings*, that, she can make that which is *Righteous* and *Holy*, appear to be *unrighteous* and *prophane* : wrap up *Suparlativ Impietie* in such a *Mystery*, that, it shall seem the Perfection of *Holiness*, make *Traitors* and *Murderers* appear to be *Saints* and *Martyrs*, true *Saints* and *Martyrs* to be reputed *Murderers*, and *Traitors* ; and bring them to the greatest outward shame and suffering.

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Therefore to prevent these *Falacies*, we must by the example of *David*, seek of God, to be rightly informed, not onely as touching the true *Cause* of the *Plagues* that are feared, or lie upon us, but also for the *Principal Offenders*; for, if we seek but to *men*, to *humane Lawes*, and reason, and to what our own hearts will Dictate, there is so much falsehood in all these, being usually swayed by *Self-Interests*, that we may easily be deceived.

If inquiry had been made in *David's* time, touching the *Famine* afore mentioned, of that part of the People, then of *Saul's Faction*, who were the Murtherers, for whose *Bloodshed* that *Plague* was inflicted; they, probably would have answered, that it was for the bloodiness of *David's* house, and of his confederates, who had Trayterously disinherited the true apparent Heir of the *Kingdom*, Anoynted and made King by Gods own appointment, with consent of all the *People*; and that his *Blood-guiltiness* was manifest by a long *Rebellious warfare* against the house of *Saul* his *Lawful Sovereign*. If the same question should have been then asked of *David's Party*, it is likely they would have said, that *Saul* and his *partakers* were the Murtherers by shedding blood in opposing him, to whom God had translated the *Kingdom* from *Saul*, for his disobedience, and conferred it on *David* by the same *Anointing*, by the same *Prophet*, who inaugurated *Saul*; and in regard the *Kingdom* was also confirmed upon *David*, by consent of the same *People*. If the *Priests* in these dayes, had been consulted withall, they perhaps would have thought and said, that it had been, for the *Blood* of those *Priests of the Lord*, which

which were barbarously butchered by *Saul*, rather than for the blood of the *Gibeonites*; and, it may be they and many other (who usually Judge according to common appearances) would have thought that *Famine* had been inflicted for the blood of *Abner*, *Ishbosheth*, *Amasa*, *Amnon*, *Hriah*, and many other, as well as for the blood of the said *Priests*. But, the *Judgement* came not forth at that time for any of these; It was not absolutely for shedding of meer Innocent blood; nor for *Blood Royal*, or esteemed Sacred; no not for the blood of a *King*, but for Blood shed by a *King*; and for no such precious blood as the blood of *Israelites*, or *Friends*, or *Free Subjects*, but for the *Blood of slaves*, of whom little account was made; and for breach of an *Oath*, and a *Covenant* to and with despised Persons, though contracted *Illegally*, yea, contrary to Gods *expresse command*, with a People whom they were to have destroyed; and though, it had been fraudulently and surreptionally procured: which *Exemplary Judgement*, was executed and left upon record, to make it known to all *Nations*, and *Generations*, how abominable it is to God, when men violate the *Laws of Humane Society*, though out of a pretended Zeal to the welfare of his *own People*; and, that he will sooner dispence with an *Oath* and *Covenant* made ignorantly, contrary to his own *expresse command*, then with violation thereof, in such a case, when it is once made; and, that, neither length of time, or Pious, or Politick pretences, can incline him to leave it unpunished.

This hints unto us, that which will be very considerable at this present by you, and by all this
Nation,

Nation, as touching that *Bloodshed* into which God is making inquisition; & concerning which we are to make inquiry of God himself, by the *Urim* and *Thummim* of his *Word*; as also, by impartially examining our own *Consciences*; lest the *false Witnesses*, which the World & self intrest may suborn, corrupt our Judgements: For, if we ask of our *meer Courtiers*, or *Fawning Parasites* (who think there is more Divinity in the blood of *Kings* then of other men) whose *Bloodshed* is at this time punishable by *Famine*, they (as I conceive) will tell us, that it is onely for the Blood of the *late King*, which I believe not, though there lies a *blood-guiltiness* for that, on very many. If we ask of the *Prelates*, they peradventure will add thereto the blood of the late Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury*, and the violence done to their *Hierarchy*. If we ask the rest of the *Clergy*, they will cast in the blood of those *Ministers of the Gospel*, who have been slain by the Sword, are destroyed by Oppression: The *Peers* will say it is likewise for the Blood of some of the *Nobility*: If we put the Question to the *Generality* of the *People*, they will affirm, that it was for the blood of their *Parents*, *Children*, *Brethren* and fellow *Subjects*. If we demand the opinion of the *Papists*, they will answer, that it is for the blood of their *Priests* and *Jesuites*. If we Interrogate the *Protestants*, they unanimously cry out and say, that it is for the blood of those three hundred sixty and odd Thousands, who were in a most Treacherous and Barbarous manner Massacred in *Ireland*, by the *Papists*: If we think by our *Laws* and *Parliaments*, to be rightly informed, they (not being infallible) will leave us as doubtful as the

the rest ; For, *Laws* contradict each other ; one *Parliament* Enacts that for Law, which another makes Illegal ; and that to be *Heretic* and *Treason*, which we are enjoined by another *Parliament* to embrace for Orthodox *Truth* and *Loyalty* ; *Hocus Pocus* ! so, that if we had no better *Oracle* to enquire at, then these aforementioned, we may add *blood* to *blood*, by punishing *Innocents* as *Offenders*, and Justifying *Malifactors*.

In truth a *Blood-guiltiness*, more or less, in all these respects, lies upon some of all dissenting *Parties* throughout the whole *Nation* ; yea upon all without excepting one person, though they perceive it not ; and a greater *blood-guiltiness* then the blood-shed of all those put together will amount unto ; even a *guiltiness* of the precious Blood of *Christ Jesus* and his *Saints*, by oppressing them, not onely in depriving them of their *Liberties* and *Estates* (whereby *Life* is to be preserved) until they lose their lives more miserably then by a *quick murther* ; but, by *Tyrannizing* over their *Consciences* also, to the destroying of their souls, if God prevent not. Unless therefore we will heed, and weigh this *guilt*, and sanctifie out formal *Humiliations* with more works of *Justice* and *Mercy* then heretofore, they will prove *empty vanities*, and *Sacrifices* without Salt or Oyl. And, when we have according to *Dauids Example*, duely searched out the *Sin* for which God hath begun to punish us (which probably is *Bloodshed* in chief) the same *blood-guiltiness* will continue upon this *Nation*, until as far as in us lies, we shall proportionably apply what is justly deserved by the *Principal*, *accessary* and

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casual Transgressors; putting difference between them according to the quality and degree of their offences; seeing some of those who have been accused and condemned, may possibly be as far from being guilty of *Bloodshed*, or *Treason*, knowingly or intentionally, as they who went with *Abalom* in the simplicity of their hearts to a sacrifice, when he rebelled against his father; and as *guiltless* of wilful *Treason*, as the *Priest* was, who gave the *Shewbread* to *David* and his Souldiers when pursued by *Saul*. Two men may be Active in the same work, grinding at the same Mill, fight in the same Cause, at one and the same *Battle*, and yet one of them be justly excused and received to mercy, the other as justly rejected. And when the matter is doubtful, we must labour to our utmost, to find out the *certainty*, inclining rather to *compassion* then to extream *Rigor* in such ambiguities; else we do neither according to the mind of God, nor make our selves to be so capable of his *mercy* as we may. *Solomon* advised us not to be over just, that is, not to execute any *Justice* without *mercy*. The very *mercies* of the wicked are cruel, much more cruel then is their *Justice*. They who think they expresse much love and Loyalty to the King, or to do him the more honour, by how much the more blood they shed to avenge his *Fathers Death*, do more disadvantage and dishonour him thereby, then they who took away his *Life*, as it will be manifest at the last. The Indulgence of *David* to the People, who rebelled with his son *Abalom*, doth imply that a difference should be put between offenders according to the degree and nature of their

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their offence ; as did also the Cities of *Refuge*
for *man-slaughter* ; The *Jews*, who were guilty
of the blood of *Jesus Christ*, the King of Kings,
(as *Paul* was also by Persecuting the *Saints*) were
capable of Divine Mercy in regard they did it
meerly through ignorance, and by being invol-
ved in the *Epidemical Sin* of the *Nation* at that
time ; So, may many be at this present : And
our King (if I am not misinformed) is so
naturally inclined to extend compassion to such
offenders, that probably the issue of *Blood*, had
been here stopt long since, if he had not been urg-
ed to more severity then he is inclined unto. And,
doubtless, they who submitted unto His late
Proclamation, (which threatned that no mercy
should be vouchsafed unto them, who there-
upon surrendred not their Persons) were not
so mad, as to come in with a purpose to be hang'd,
seeing they might as possibly have secured their
lives by flight as others have yet done ; But, know-
ing their Consciences clear (as I suppose) from
having had any malicious intention in those
transactions wherein they were judged offenders ;
they surrendred themselves into the Kings hands,
with a belief that their Indempnity was sincere-
ly intended by the said *Proclamation*, upon their
submission ; seeing else, it had either signified no-
thing as to them, or, somewhat *worse then nothing*, to
delude them with a false hope ; which to believe,
were such a Derogation from the Kings honour,
as I am not guilty of ; and I am perswaded he is
so sensible how much it may concern him, that he
will not destroy the hope which was begotten

by his own voluntary Act of Clemency. I my
self, (as, it may be, some other were) though in-
gaged heretofore with such as opposed the *Royal*
Interest, was even then, as far from intending
any thing maliciously against the Kings Person or
Dignity, that I truly pitied his estate; And so
God prosper me., as I would gladly have contri-
buted what was in my power toward his *Restora-*
tion, or the settling of him in a safe and comfort-
able being, if I had then known how to have done
it, without resisting God, or infringing that
fidelity to which I conceived; I was then obliged;
For which respect, I do verily believe, I may
now claim an interest in all his Majesties Pub-
lick *Acts of Grace*, notwithstanding my former
Misprisions: And that according to his Royal Pro-
mises and Ingagements voluntarily made, I may
justly expect, at least a competent subsistence for
me and my Family, out of that estate, which I
purchased and possessed, before his *Restoration*:
For, he is not more safe in any mans professed
Allegiance or *Principles*, then in mine; who am
probably perswaded in my heart to believe, that
after he hath tryed the temper of his People,
God will put into his heart a desire and resolu-
tion, to declare and prosecute somewhat, extra-
ordinarily tending to his Glory, and to the fru-
strating of the fears, hopes and expectations of
many thousands, who are now opposites in their
Judgements and *Affections*: Nothing, but a mali-
cious wickedness can supersede this *Mercy*. It is
a more manly *Principle* to ruine men speedily and
outright in fury, then by dissembling an intenti-
on of *Mercy* to linger out their Torments, and
destroy

destroy them at the last ; of which cruelty, I conceive the *Prelates* to be less guilty at this time, then many other by whom we suffer ; For, they are, for the most part, so true to their *Pride* and *Avarice*, that they devour us as quickly as they can, without masking or hiding their Intentions.

Let there be sincerity therefore, in executing *Justice* and extending *Mercy* ; and let us know and heed this to a *maxime*, which ought undoubtedly to be received ; to wit, that if any *King*, *Supream Power*, *Prince*, *Commander in chief*, or any other by them Authoritatively deputed to dispence their *Mercy*, or other *Priviledges* or *Concessions* of *Grace*, or of *right due*, shall, by his or their *Declaration*, *Proclamation*, *Letter*, *Promise* or *Engagement*, make tender of them voluntarily to any real or suspected *Delinquents*, (without any capitulation or conditions) actually insisted on by the said *Delinquents* (especially the said *Granters* receiving benefit afterwards thereby) If these *Delinquents* accept thereof, submit, and put themselves into their Protection, without questoning the terms of expression, or the sincerity of the said *Granters* intentions ; Then, the said *Concessions* are to be construed to the utmost advantage of them, who so confided and submitted. And, if in such cases there shall be any secret *Reserve* or *Intention* in the said *Granters*, whereby they who so absolutely confided, shall be deprived of their *hope* ; or if there be any explicite or *equivocal terme* therein, whereby the *Grace* hoped for, may be vacated, by the future Judgement of the said *Granters*, or of other men, who are apparent
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Enemies, or doubtful Friends to the *Granters*; it will be so evident an Injustice, so ignoble, and so Hypocritical a *Prevarication*, that, what Reason of *State* soever is pretended, it will be abominable to God and Men: The said *Granters*, will justly lose their honour both abroad and at home; none will confide in their *Grants*, *Promises* or *Engagements* for the future, and *Divine Vengeance* will also pursue them. This may perhaps be distastful to them who relish not such assertions; But, he who truly fears God, and declares necessary *Truths* in season with a good Conscience, needs not fear men, how furious or powerful soever they be; For, they will be afraid of him, if his Assertions be of God.

Moreover, let us take notice, that we shall neither be freed from the *Judgement* threatened, nor clear from the guilt of *bloodshed* past, unless we prosecute every *medium* in our Power to prevent *bloodshed* to come, by taking away the occasions of malicious *Animosities* which foment discord, the Usher to *Murthers* and *Rebellions*: And this will never be effected in meer *Morral* or *Carnal Men*, but by executing of *Justice* between Man and Man without partiality, and by permitting them to enjoy their *Liberties* and *Livelihoods*, according to Law, without Oppressions; For, it being their *Life-Blood*, they will struggle for it, upon all advantages (though it be by *bloodshed*) let *Divines*, Preach what they will, and *Swarf-men* threaten & impose, whatsoever Oaths and other manacles they can devise; yea, though they lose *Liberty*, *Estate*, *Life*, *Body* and *Soul* to recover it; Because they cannot be made

so sensible of any thing, as of their *Self Interest* and *present wants*; So, that, if their distempers be not asswaged, by the means aforesaid, occasion of *blood-guiltiness* will still continue; And as for them who being by *regeneration* made so conscientious of yielding *Active* or *Passive Obedience*, to the Commands of *Authority*, that, they will suffer any thing rather then resist to blood, though they lose all that whereby the maintenance of their life-blood consisteth (and are exposed to greater sufferings, then by a speedy Murder) they will make the *Land* lyable to greater *blood-guiltiness*, and more dreadful *Judgements*, then the former: Because, at last, it will provoke God for the sakes of those *Patient Innocents*, to arise from his Throne in Heaven and descend to be their avenger. This, I am warranted to declare; therefore consider it; *Reason* is reason, and *Truth* Truth, though spoken by *Fools* and *Children*; The greatest Persons if they despise it, shall be despised; and the wisest, if they slight it, are Fools.

It is impossible to enjoy the *Peace of GOD*, or long to preserve the *Civil Peace*, without other-while giving an occasion of *Bloodshed*, when the *Consciences* of men are intrenched upon, by imposing that which is destructive to their *Natural* and *Christian Freedom* in things indifferent; especially, when they perceive them to be imposed for superstitious ends onely, and to advance the covetuous designes and Interest of corrupt *Persons* in *Societies*: For, though they who are sincerely conscientious, will (as I said before) suffer any thing rather then give a just occasion of offence,

fence, or act ought whereby the Civil Peace may be violated ; yet, it is so abominable to meer Natural and Moral men, to see an unlawful Interest upheld and indulged, under pretences of promoting *Pietie*, or the *Common Welfare*, that they cannot well bear it, without such murmurings as may produce mischief at the last. Among other things considerable in that kinde, the Prohibition of meats on certain dayes and times, makes many very sensible, how impudently they have been fooled out of their Freedoms by Religious Impostors. For, though it be reasonable that the forbearing of *Flesh*, and the eating of Fish at sometimes should be enjoyned, for preserving the breed of Cattle, or such like respects ; and that neither the *Fishing Trade* may be neglected, nor that blessing or abundance of Fish, seem to be despised, wherewith God hath plentifully furnished these *Ilands*: yet, who can understand what prudence or *Pietie* it is, that, according to an *Antichristian* Principle (which was introduced as it were in despight of what God hath declared in his *Word*) those *meats* should be judged unlawful, on some dayes in a Religious respect, which being Sanctified by Prayer and Thanksgiving, may be eaten at all times without offence to God ? If there be no thing of Religion in such a *Restraint*, why should it be imposed as pertinent to Religion, and managed by *Officers* thereto pretending ? If the observation of a *Lent*, be not as truly a *Turkish* as a *Christian Discipline*, or Ceremony, Let us know by what *Holy Text*, it is commanded, equivalent to that Authority, whereby that, and such like Impositions

ons, and interdicted, or at least reprov'd. And, if, indeed it be of Divine Institution, let it then be considered, what an abominable hypocrisie & abuse it is of that Discipline, that the *Prelates*, their Vicars or other Officers, or Doctor Dodipol, with such like Persons should make a sordid gain thereof to satisfie their Covetousness? dispence with this Liberty to whomsoever they please for money; even to those who desire it, meerly to satisfie their *Luxurious Appetite*? taking that Freedom also to themselves, by licencing each other to eat *Flesh*, when prohibited? If a *poor-man* be so sick, that he cannot eat Fish without hazzard of his life, or hath such an Antipathie thereunto that it alwayes indangers his health to eat it; why should his life or health be put into the hands of such Persons who regard nothing so much as their *Self-Interest*? what Religion or Charity is it to make this man pay money for it? Is it not affliction enough that he hath such infirmities, unless he shall be inforced also to add unto his Poverty, by paying for that Liberty to some Shabby Fellow, which God bestowed freely upon him? yea, to pay for it to one perhaps, who whilst he is Fasting, will consume in Feasting, that which he exacted? were it not more *Christian* like (if such a *Restraint* be civilly necessary) that sober honest and faithful men, should take the money given for such Licenses to help relieve the sick and needy in necessitous times? yea, if it be expedient for a publick benefit, that there should be a restraint from eating *Flesh* at some set times (as I believe it may be, if ordered according to the true intention of our *Lawes*) It

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seems

seems nevertheless, unreasonable, that a corrupt Magistrate should raise a large profit, to himself and his Officers, by Licensing Butchers, Cooks and Powlterers, to the making that dearer to the People, which was over dear before. It were therefore more agreeable to *common Justice*, that the profit by Fees and Fines for such Licenses, if they be necessary, should be rather employed to ease publick Burthens; or else to relieve the needy and oppressed: For, that Justice and Charity, might somewhat allay their distempers, who may perhaps be provoked beyond the Limit of their patience. *This last Paragraph was by forgetfulness omitted in the Papers which I sent to the House of Commons.*

This I have cast in by the way, for a *Supplement* to my *Remonstrance*, and now you have in effect, the sum of what I have heretofore expressed publickly or in private, as pertinent to my *Vindication*; and I will hereupon request nothing simply relating to myself: For, to say truth, I can ask nothing to any purpose, nor can you *give or take away* any thing which will not be as advantageous or disadvantageous to your selves, as to me, according as it shall be justly or unjustly *given or taken away*; and, if my *Flesh* had as little sence, of those torments the world can inflict upon me, as my *Soul* hath at present, of those pleasures of hers, which I formerly enjoyed, she had nothing in her power, which would much *delight or offend* me. If you restore unto me the Freedom of my Person, and possession of my *Estate*, they may be lost again to morrow; and, unless I might therewith enjoy the *Liberty of my Mind* according to the

the *Law of Nature*; and of my Conscience, according to the *Law of Grace*, (whereof I see no great likelihood at present) I shall not greatly value either of those accommodations, or my Life; but, as it relates to him who gave it. I have lived almost three quarters of a hundred years upon Earth, wherein I have observed the Works of God and men; seen the Almighty's Judgements disregarded, and his Grace turned into Wantonneis; many *Changes*, every one worse then the other; and am now in *Purgatory*, next Wall to *Hell*, where I perceive those *Fiery Tryals* which melt and soften a few, do harden most men, into a froward impenitency; the *Gold* and *Silver* is thereby purified; the Wood, Hay, and Stubble consume; and I shall shortly ascend from hence, thither, where (though all things are already known) I must give up that *Testimony* which I shall leave behind me, of this *Generation*; wherein *Apostacies*, *Hypocrisie*, *Prophaness*, with all manner of *Wickedness*, and *impieties* ripen so fast: (yea, wherein the *Doctrine* of *Christ* is to disparaged by the Professors thereof, who live contrary to the *Life of Christ*) that if the *Angels*, thereto appointed, do not speedily thrust in their *Sickles* and gather the *Wheat* into Gods *Garner*, and hack up the *Tares* for the fire; there will be few handfuls of good *Corn* left upon Earth, and little *Faith* found amongst men when *Christ* cometh. This *Testimony* is true, though expressed in much infirmity, after the manner of men; therefore, I will conclude all with a *Petition* for thole things onely, wherein Gods *Glory*, your *Honour*, and the *Interests* of many

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Thousands are comprehended, as well as mine;
The said *Petition* is that which follows.

The PETITION.

I Humbly beseech your Honours, as you respect the many great and extraordinary Mercies of God lately vouchsafed to the King, to your selves, and to those whom you Represent : As you stand in awe of those Judgements, that are in part removed ; as you desire the total removal of those which yet lie upon us ; and the prevention of those that are feared ; as also, to behold the Face of God with Joy at the last Judgement: that, in all your future Consultations, Debates and Actings, you seek the preservation of a good Conscience, in preferring the Cause and Honour of God, before all Royal, Popular, or Personal Interests : That, in particular you would be careful his Divine Worship, may not be adulterated, or clogged with the Superstitious Traditions of Men, by your assent ; and that no Power, Person or Persons, by your neglect or means, be permitted to usurp a seat in the Conscience, which is Gods Peculiar Throne upon Earth. That, you will

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will so endeavour to Establish the Kings
Throne in Righteousness, that Justice and
Mercy, being the Supporters thereof, nei-
ther the Just Royal Perogative, nor the
Lawful Liberties of the People (by whom
you are Intrusted) may be infringed, or
clash; But, that, Right may be equally
dispensed. That, you would be merciful as
our Heavenly Father is merciful, extend-
ing Compassion (which is the best Sacrifice)
to other men, according to that Mercy which
you would willingly receive, if you were in
their stead; rather mitigating, then aggra-
vating their punishment, who have offended
through Ignorance, Weakness, or Incon-
siderateness, and not by Design or Malice.
And, forasmuch, as the Priviledges you Claim,
were not at first conferred for your own sakes,
but for the sakes of the People whom you re-
present, and by whom you were chosen and
intrusted; That, you make no farther use of
those Priviledges for your Personal advanta-
ges, then may consist with your Trust; which
is to be kept inviolable without respect of Per-
sons, Fear, Favour, or Reward. These
Petitions being by you approved and granted,
so far forth as it may be in your Power, I shall
have so large a share in them, that it will be
needless

(62)
needless for me ; to Petition ought a part by
my Self ; and I shall be fully contented with
what God pleaseth to allow ; Praise him, and
Pray for you unfeignedly, as in Duty I am
bound ; who, by vouchsafing these requests, shall
have a Joyful welcome home, by all your
Counties, Cities, and Burroughs ; when you
are adjourned, prorogued, or dissolved ; And
your Honour, shall be so transcendant, that no
Tongue, Pen, Lybeller or Lybel, shall have
Power to cast a blemish thereupon.

Jamq; Opus Exegi.

*My Life, and work (for ought, that yet I know)
Is either quite, or almost ended now ;
And my Quietus est, within a Grave
Is, that, which best would please me, now to have :
For, by their struggling, many years together,
My Flesh and Spirit, have nigh tir'd each other.
Lord, let the short-snuff, of my Life unspent
Burn out, with clear flames, and a pleasing scent.*

*Newgate, January the
27th. 1661.*

Geo. Wither.

THE END.

